

Leona Lawrence
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"EILERMAN'S," NEWPORT

In the spring of 1883, Herman Eilerman, aided by several of his sons, opened the first Eilerman store in Newport. The location at that time was in the six hundred block of Monmouth Street but it was soon moved to larger quarters on York Street.

In 1888 the store was moved to a new building that had been erected at 814 Monmouth Street, and was the first move made by any merchant from York Street, which was then the business district, to the present thoroughfare. From 1888 until 1903 the store remained in that location. At that time August Eilerman, Sr. Built the present building at 818 Monmouth Street, which because of the electric lights and many new innovations in store arrangement and lighting, was considered to be the last word in modernity.

The aspect of the business district has changed greatly since that time however, and the remodeling of the present store in the fall of 1931 was intended to again make the Eilerman Store the last word in store arrangements. But although the new atmosphere of the store is one of luxury, it is invitingly homelike and there has been no change in the policies which have made this store possible.

The building itself has been converted from a structure of the early 90's to a strictly modern building, whose architectural beauty rivals that of any structure of its size in this location.

The facade of the building has been carried out in vitrolite, ornamented and inlaid with sand-blasted designs of black and silver. Above the arched window which tops the street entrance is a floral panel

of colored vitrolite tiles, the only one of its kind in the world.

Above this is a chromium metal flag holder, which has been set into the wall. The name "Eilerman" is sand-blasted into the face of the tile and lacquered with silver.

The lobby of the store is a triumph of modern store display planning. The floor is of terrazzo, and the color scheme of the exterior is carried out in vitrolite, chromium metal and decorated plaster relief. It is illuminated by concealed lighting. The large painted panels immediately inside the entrance arch are painted in mottled pastel tints on a silver background.

The eleven display windows located on Monmouth Street, and in the lobby are paneled in Avodire, a rare African wood, and are decorated with American black walnut. The floors of the windows are inlaid designs, using black walnut border and a Erim-Vera strip with a herringbone center. The lighting effects for these display windows have been concealed and each window is equipped with spot and side lighting.

Situated above the lobby are the offices and rest rooms, which occupy the entire dimensions of the mezzanine. They are reached by a Monel Metal stairway leading from the ground floor. Seen from the interior, the wrapping and change department on the mezzanine looks like an attractive balcony, guarded by an ornamental stainless steel railing.

Within the store are the most modern of fixtures and furnishings. The entire 10,000 square feet of floor space has been covered with inlaid linoleum which carried out the color scheme of white and black. A modernistic star design of black has been inlaid in a white background. Contrary to the usual conventional plan of carpeting laid in strips to form aisles, the floor of the store is covered with scatter-

size rugs.

The entire center of the front part of the store is given over to haberdashery. The Australian inlaid walnut casing has plate glass tops and sides that extend down a foot. They are indirectly lighted and permit the showing of merchandise much in the manner that a show window does.

To the left of this is the shoe department, with walnut cases and shelves and individual upholstered chairs for the customers to recline in while fitting shoes.

The rear of the store has been separated by a high arch. In this section is situated the boy's department on the left, and the men's clothing department on the right. The fixtures here are finished in mahogany.

The high white walls are hung with large India prints, and the tops of the show cases bear potted palms. A lamson tube system is used and there are extension telephones in all departments.

The vitrolite front of the Eilerman Store is the third largest job of its kind in the United States, the largest use of the material being made on the Chrysler Building, New York City, and the second largest on the Empire State Building also in New York City.

It is the only store in the world which has utilized the material to such an extent on its facade. There are 4,000 separate pieces of vitrolite in the front, each of which had to be separately marked for specific place. Twelve men labored thirty days to set the tiles. Each tile is laid separately and surrounded by a metal strip. It is impossible for them to come out without smashing the entire store front.

The Facade of the store is 65 feet high and 56 feet wide.

INFORMATION obtained from Pamphlet at Chamber of Commerce,
Newport, Kentucky.

Supplement to attached memorandum of Extracts of the
History of Campbell County-

While it is true that the beginnings of the history of Campbell County originated around the Newport city area still, Campbell County can be classed as a county of sections, and much history developed also in the rural areas of the county.

One of such areas can be referred to as the Mentor-California-Flagg Spring section, for this section, and notably several of its distinguished personages, attracted state and nation-wide attention.

On a high hill overlooking the town of Mentor and overlooking the picturesque Ohio River Valley for many miles both east and west, an historic house was erected shortly after the War Between the States; this house being erected by none other than the late Rev. and Prof. Nick Pettit, one of the most outstanding educators and builders that Campbell County ever produced.

After the Rev. Mr. Pettit had been called to the "Homeland" the property and historic house passed into the hands of Mr. W. T. H. Howe, a nationally known character, who served for many years as the President of the American Book Company of New York, Cincinnati and other cities.

Mr. Howe lived there mostly during the summer months, however, he remodeled the historic house and being interested in history, he established at the home an historic library as well as a museum in which he had on display many of the great works of art, as well as literature, and which was the showplace of all the local area, attracting distinguished visitors from many counties in the state, as well as states and countries.

However, regardless of the fact that he was a great business man and executive, he died suddenly a number of years ago intestate, leaving no will, and the historic home and great estate of his became involved in extensive litigation in the courts of the state, with most of it passing into the hands of his so-called common-law wife, which was the regret of all who knew him. However, the house and property was sold in settling the estate to Mr. Jack Thatcher of Alexandria, who is endeavoring to develop a sub-division of the property. However, the historic house still stands overlooking a vast area of beautiful and picturesque area for many miles both east and west as well as south in the county of Campbell.

Those living in this area have always been considered as a deeply religious people and during the latter part of the eighties organized a group and known as the Campbell County Sunday School Union, or rather the Beech Grove Sunday School Union, and through the sale of stock to Sunday School students from one cent to twenty five dollars purchased and erected a camp ground, amid many historic beech trees, on the site, where yearly programs were conducted each year, and which attracted speakers and musicians of state and nation-wide note. Several Governors during its long and honorable history have addressed the annual meetings, referred to as "celebrations" at the historic site.

An act was passed by the Kentucky General Assembly, sponsored by Representative John C. De Moss, chartering and incorporating the Beech Grove Sunday School Union, which, to this day, has never been abrogated or repealed by succeeding sessions of the General Assembly.

Officers of this Union serve without compensation and it is considered to be a high honor to serve as an officer of this Union.

Just east of Mentor on the State Road No. 8, or the Mary Ingles Highway. (Note that we have been spelling the name of this woman incorrectly for many years, and the correct spelling is not "Ingles" but "Ingles" as noted by all historians and by descendants of this famous woman, who was the first white woman to set foot on Kentucky soil, and in 1755 she escaped from Indian captivity at Big Bone Lick in Boone County and finally made her way on foot along the winding southern bank of the Ohio River and finally to safety with her people at Draper's Meadows in Virginia. The trailway used by Mrs. Ingles in making her escape is now a state highway and known as the "Mary Ingles Highway."

Probably the most distinguished personage that came from Mentor proper was none other than the late Professor A. J. Jolly of Mentor, who served as the Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction during the administration of Dr. V. O. Gilbert, and before serving as the Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction, he served as the Principal of the High Schools at Augusta and Bedford, Kentucky. He served one term as a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives from the district in Campbell County outside of the City of Newport, with much distinction and honor, however, after receiving the nomination two years hence without opposition and was well on his way to be re-elected, he died suddenly at his home in Mentor. His funeral services were attended by none other than the Honorable William J. Fields, distinguished Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. He was laid to rest in the beautiful cemetery on top of the hill overlooking Mentor where he will sleep until the Resurrection Morn.

Yes, just east of Mentor on the Mary Ingles Highway is to be found the remnants of an historic house erected during and before the era before Kentucky joined the Union of States in 1792, and is still referred to as the Thomas Kennedy Fort, for this historic house served as a fort to repel the early sorays of the Indians in the local area, and for many years its port holes served as shooting areas for the rifles of the early pioneers. Thomas Kennedy was one of the early settlers in Campbell County and his descendants still live in Mentor. Efforts have been made to establish a pioneer museum and state park at the site, but to-date no actual work has been accomplished in the movement, however, it would make a very historic site for such a project, and should attract thousands of tourists from throughout the local and state wide area.

Probably the most outstanding Minister of the Gospel to come from the local area was none other than the late Rev. James Monroe Jolly, whose forefather came from Virginia and located in Campbell County at the birth of the county. The Rev. Mr. Jolly was of the Baptist faith and he conducted revivals and preached regularly at many of the rural churches in Campbell County for more than a generation. Besides being a Minister of the Gospel he was also a builder of numerous house and especially school houses and church buildings, of all denominations, many of them standing in this day and age as a monument to his labors. His descendants still live in the Mentor and Flag Spring areas, all of them being faithful adherents of his early teachings and doctrine.

While Mentor, formerly known as Bellemont, was never a shipping center from an Ohio river point of view, because of the sand bars protruding far out into the river at this point still, at near-by California formerly known as Oregon, was just such a shipping point and as one period

in the history of Campbell County, Oregon, or early California, was well known as a shipping venter on the Ohio River, and ~~ad~~ operated a dock or shipping facilities at this point, which later resulted in the community being chartered ~~as~~ incorporated as a town by the Kentucky General Assembly. This town has never to-date surrendered its charter and is still operating as a city of the sixth class. However, the great Ohio River floods of 1884 and 1937 virtually destroyed many of the houses and industries in the historic town.

These floods, and especially the one of 1937, worked havoc on the town, and diminished its population to a great extent, with the result that the once proud and thriving A. J. Jolly High School, located just ~~west of~~ east of the town proper, had to be abandoned and the high school pupils are now attending the consolidated Campbell County High School at Alexandria, however, the A. J. Jolly Trade School is still maintained in the community.

The local community or communities also boast that they maintain a Masonic Lodge at California, which serves the local areas of California, Mentor, Flag Spring, Carthage and adjoining communities. This lodge is known as the Mayo Lodge, named in honor of the first Postmaster of Newport, Mr. Daniel Mayo, and old Seventh Street in Newport was once known as Mayo Street.

Volumes could also be written of other distinguished personages and events that occurred in the local communities of Mentor, California, Flag Spring and Carthage; for instance, during the War Between the States, two of the prominent citizens of California were captured by the Union Army and shot as spies, however, everyone knows familiar with the families and the history of the communities that they were now spies, and should have been exchanged as prisoners of war.

For Mrs. Mary Jolly
For Miss Phyllis Jolly.

December 31, 1957.

From C. B. Truesdell.